

Lesson Eight

1. **pander** (pan' dər) *v.* to exploit weaknesses of others; to cater to the vices of others
The trendy clothing store *pandered* to materialistic clients by selling shoddy clothing at outrageously high prices.
syn: cajole; indulge
2. **otiose** (ō' shē ōs) *adj.* useless; futile
The director decided to remove the *otiose* scenes that increased the length of the film but failed to add to the suspense.
syn: unimportant; worthless
ant: productive; necessary
3. **puerile** (pyu' əɹ əl) *adj.* childish; juvenile
Uncle Joe refused to tolerate his teenage nephew's *puerile* behavior.
syn: immature; infantile
ant: mature
4. **aleatory** (ā' lē ə tōr ē) *adj.* dependent on luck or chance
Because of the uncertain weather forecast, the success of our company picnic is purely *aleatory*.
5. **asperity** (a' sper' i tē) *n.* roughness or harshness; severity
The teacher felt bad after his *asperity* caused a student to cry.
syn: acerbity; irascibility
ant: mildness; kindness
6. **renunciation** (ri' nun sē ā' shən) *n.* rejection; refusal to acknowledge
Members of the club responded to Bill's *renunciation* of their doctrine by asking him to leave.
syn: denial; refusal
ant: admittance; concession
7. **unimpeachable** (un' im pē chə bəl) *adj.* unquestionable; beyond doubt
The Internet is not an *unimpeachable* source of information for academic research.
syn: trustworthy; infallible
ant: questionable; flawed
8. **inveigh** (in vā') *v.* to disapprove angrily; to protest
Irene *inveighed* against her company's hiring of a former competitor for a prominent position.
syn: berate; condemn; remonstrate
ant: commend; laud; praise

9. lionize (lī' ə nīz) *v.* to assign great social importance to; to treat as a celebrity

The public lionized the boy for saving the child from the burning building.

syn: acclaim; exalt; honor *ant:* ignore; overlook

10. allay (ə lā') *v.* to relieve; to alleviate
Mom tried to allay my fear of flying by reading favorable airline statistics.

syn: calm; ease; pacify *ant:* excite; intensify; agitate

11. vitiate (vish' ē āt) *v.* to corrupt morally; to contaminate
Mark claims that prisons simply vitiate the spirits of the inmates.

syn: defile; devalue; spoil *ant:* purify; clarify; cleanse

12. recalcitrant (ri kal' si trənt) *adj.* stubbornly resistant; showing opposition

The recalcitrant child kicked and screamed when the barber tried to give him his first haircut.

syn: defiant; insubordinate; unwilling *ant:* agreeable; obedient

13. exegesis (ek sə jē' sis) *n.* an explanation of a text; a critical interpretation

The students read an exegesis of *Macbeth* to understand the play better.

syn: analysis; exposition; commentary

14. ameliorate (ə mēl' yə rāt) *v.* to make better; to improve
The manager asked for suggestions that might ameliorate working conditions at the factory.

syn: enhance; upgrade *ant:* weaken; damage; corrupt

15. profligate (prof' li git) *adj.* wasteful and immoral
The young heir lived a profligate life of alcohol, excess, and greed.

syn: licentious; decadent *ant:* virtuous; principled

Exercise I

Words in Context

From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.

unimpeachable exegesis otiose renunciation
puerile pander recalcitrant

1. The defense attorney's _____ efforts to win the trial simply delayed the inevitable; the _____ evidence had quickly convinced the jury that the defendant was guilty. When the verdict was read, the defendant, a former executive, shocked courtroom observers with _____ remarks. Bailiffs then dragged the _____ prisoner from the courtroom, while he kicked and clawed at any court official within reach.

"The defendant's blatant disregard for the law implies a complete _____ of it," said the judge, "demands a strict reprisal, which will be determined at the sentencing hearing tomorrow."

From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.

aleatory ameliorate profligate exegesis
inveigh otiose asperity

2. Tina liked her new first-floor apartment, but she couldn't stand the _____ upstairs tenants, who partied incessantly through the night, keeping everyone awake. After enduring several days of nonstop music and stomping, Tina visited the noisy neighbor and spoke with a [n] _____ she usually reserved for dealing with the most difficult of people.

"You shouldn't require a [n] _____ of the lease to know that it's not proper to disturb every tenant in the building with your noise!" screamed Tina, in order to be heard over the blaring stereo. The offending neighbor simply closed the door, leaving Tina standing in the hall alone. During the week that followed, Tina encouraged her other neighbors to call the landlord and _____ against the habits of the noisy tenants so as to _____ the living conditions of the apartment building.

From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.

pander lionize unimpeachable aleatory
vitiate allay asperity

3. The world of pop culture _____ the talk-radio host for his racy programs, but thousands of angry listeners claimed that his low humor and poorly supported arguments simply _____ his younger generations of listeners. The host, they claimed, _____ to the young by supplying their vivid imaginations with scenarios that defy traditional morality. Raising children properly is _____ enough, they argued, without adding counterproductive distractions. Network executives held a meeting, and in the following week, the network attempted to _____ the angry listeners' concerns by rescheduling the show to a late-night slot.

Exercise II

Sentence Completion

Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the italicized vocabulary word.

1. Dan's *otiose* attempt to ski resulted in...
2. Ryan read an *exegesis* of the cryptic poem because...
3. Some citizens feared that the new casino would *vitiate*...
4. The man *pandered* to concert fans by selling T-shirts for twenty dollars each, even though he...
5. The *profligate* senator was voted out shortly after...
6. Teresa *inveighed* against the proposed landfill because...
7. Ted thought that firing more people would *ameliorate* the company's finances, but instead...
8. The criminal mistakenly thought that the public would *lionize* him if he...
9. The professor expected *puerile* comments from four-year-olds, but not...
10. It took three hours to convince the *recalcitrant*...
11. The inmate failed to convince the parole board of his complete *renunciation* of...
12. Harvey had an *unimpeachable* belief in ghosts after...
13. To *allay* the pain of your headache, you might...
14. The drill sergeant claimed that her *asperity* was necessary because it...
15. The baseball player made an *aleatory* promise to the sick youngster that he would...

Exercise III

Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

Study the entries and answer the questions that follow.

The roots *nat* and *nasc* mean "to be born."

The root *viv* means "to live."

The root *mort* means "to die."

The prefix *con* means "together."

The prefix *pre* means "before."

The suffix *fy* means "to make."

- Using literal translations as guidance, define the following words without using a dictionary.

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| A. mortify | D. nascent |
| B. convivial | E. vivify |
| C. prenatal | F. vivid |

- A person born in a country is _____ to that country.
- The root *sect* means "to cut apart"; *vivisection*, therefore, literally means _____.
- What does a *mortician* do for a living?
- List as many words as you can think of that contain the root *viv*.

Exercise IV

Inference

Complete the sentences by inferring information about the italicized word from its context.

- Your motives must be *unimpeachable* if you plan to attempt something that...
- Someone might *inveigh* against your plan if...
- A *recalcitrant* child might refuse to...

Exercise V

Critical Reading

Below is a reading passage followed by several multiple-choice questions similar to the ones you will encounter on the ACT. Carefully read the passage and choose the best answer for each of the questions.

The author of the following passage comments on the significance of the Internet.

From protecting American lives to enriching the lives of people all over the world, the Internet stands as one of the greatest collaborative inventions of all time. In 1969, the Pentagon sponsored a network of computers at four major universities, creating a system that allowed the United States military to communicate and maintain control over missiles during a simulated nuclear war. Researchers named the network ARPANET after the Advanced Research Projects Agency, a military technological think-tank. By the early seventies, thirty-seven computers communicated with each other via ARPANET. Ironically, what began as an effort to control the chaos of a nuclear holocaust soon morphed into a chaotic world of its own.

Beginning in 1972 with the invention of electronic mail, ARPANET also functioned as a high-speed post office. At the First International Conference on Computers and Communication held in Washington, D.C., demonstrations of the network in action stimulated interest and research, and soon many more networks appeared. In 1974, researchers began using a common language, Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), that allowed the networks to communicate with each other. Stanford University researchers introduced a commercial version of ARPANET that same year, and they officially dubbed the ever-expanding network, the "Internet." In the years since, schools, libraries, hospitals, and corporations hurried to connect to the Net; thus, the Internet revolutionized society's way of learning and sharing information.

Today, the Information Superhighway entices everyone to cruise its main drags and back roads; computer companies and Internet service providers boast incredible features at affordable prices, making it easier than ever to merge into the fast lane. Combined with incredible video technology, the Internet offers casual users a scenic route for their information road trip, on which they can enjoy the picturesque view of vacation spots, pictures from the grandchildren, or the photographic evidence that the perfect chocolate cake recipe really does exist. Educators and their students use the Internet's myriad news and reference sites to access valuable information. Scientists use the Internet more than ever, communicating text, pictures, and movie footage with peers all over the world. Medical professionals exchange life-saving information with each other, and post that information for patient access. Gone are the days when the Internet belonged solely to military scientists and university researchers.

35 Despite its obvious benefits, the Internet is not without its criticism, some of which contends that the Internet is doomed to implode as independent, intelligent thought disappears in a nuclear mushroom cloud of muddled misinformation and relationships, causing community to cease altogether.

40 Since the rise of the Internet, people no longer use libraries, encyclopedias, or their own brains to solve problems. When boredom strikes and an original idea does not, people surf the sea of mediocrity known as the World Wide Web, accepting as truth everything they see there. They dismiss their powers of logic and common sense in favor of following blindly the simulacrum-strewn path of Internet misinformation. Thus, overuse and abuse of the Internet promotes banality of

45 thought, slovenliness of research habits, and sheer idiocy of behavior.

The Internet hampers an entire generation's ability to focus by constantly interrupting it with pop-up advertisements and instant messages begging for response, pandering to youthful cravings for instant gratification. Furthermore, the Internet promotes hate, and hate unchecked decimates faster than the Black Death. Prejudice prevails thanks to a plethora of propaganda-based websites espousing ethnic and cultural superiority. Even the most ignorant cretin can post on any number of Internet locations with malicious intent and simultaneous impunity. Hatemongers remain anonymous by using screen names, web pseudonyms that cannot be traced; thus, these insolent Internet users participate in on-line anarchy, 55 avoiding censorship, regulation, and accountability.

Like dynamite or atomic energy, the Internet's great potential for good is equaled only by its potential for bad. The Internet is a tool for personal excellence as much as it is a virtual altar at which millions of sex addicts faith-fully worship. Over 300 million pages of pornography clog the web, much of which exploits the 60 poor, the homeless, and the substance addicted.

In addition to causing moral decay, time online (regardless of the activity pursued) also leads to isolationism and the deterioration of social relationships. Who needs to visit friends when an e-mail will suffice? Who needs to attend religious services when groups can worship online? Virtual communities fill the 65 emptiness with pseudo-socialization that requires no commitment, laying waste to real families and real neighborhoods. Lazy consumers no longer need to leave the house to shop. Slacking singles can go on virtual dates that require no preparation. Uninformed patients can visit web doctors for dubious professional opinions, sight unseen. Soon, a generation of children with bold, gregarious chat room 70 personalities will refuse to leave their own homes because they might be required—it's frightening—to speak to an actual stranger in person.

Balance, then, and vigilance must be applied to the superhighway of information. Generations yet to come can become victim to Internet-induced agoraphobia, reduced to a collective of pale, atrophied, hermits who buy groceries, get educated, 75 get married and have children online, or they can separate the wheat from the chaff and become the most enlightened, connected civilization in the history of Earth. We'll see how it goes.

1. According to the passage, researchers developed the Internet to
A. enrich lives through enhanced communication.
B. send e-mail from universities to military bases.
C. provide a cheap means of intercollegiate communication.
D. maintain control of weapons after a nuclear attack.

2. In paragraph 3, the author uses a metaphor to
F. foreshadow the expansion of the Internet.
G. compare the Internet to a highway.
H. add humor to the passage.
J. explain how language changes to reflect technology.

3. Lines 35-38 do not include which one of the following:

- A. two antithetical remarks
- B. a reference to an actual nuclear war
- C. instances of alliteration
- D. a simile comparing intelligence and incorrect information

4. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?

- F. optimistic but cautious
- G. comical and humorous
- H. critical and judgmental
- J. technical and authoritative

5. In line 45, the word *sheer* most nearly means

- A. transparent.
- B. to slice.
- C. unmitigated.
- D. very steep.

6. In line 51, the word *cretin* most nearly means

- F. innocent person.
- G. idiotic person.
- H. unconcerned person.
- J. silly person.

7. Beginning with line 50, the author uses a series of words that begin with the same sounds. The author uses this alliteration in order to
- A. make the paragraph read like a poem.
 - B. impart an encoded message to readers.
 - C. demonstrate the language of anonymous chat rooms.
 - D. emphasize the condemning tone of the paragraph.
8. Which statement best summarizes the implication of lines 61-71?
- F. Most people reject online relationships.
 - G. Gamers are most prone to Internet addiction.
 - H. Moral decay will cause decay of individuality and original thought.
 - J. Users will opt for pseudo-interaction before real, physical, social interaction.
9. The author of the passage would probably agree that
- A. the Internet should be abolished.
 - B. the military gave the private sector the impetus for the Internet.
 - C. the Internet should be celebrated.
 - D. the Internet has a bright future.
10. Which of the following does not describe one of the threats of the Internet as portrayed in the passage?
- F. suppression of original thought
 - G. greed of Internet commerce revenue
 - H. moral decay and decline
 - J. timid, ineffective personalities